

Contents

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Did you see my first dance video drop? Wow filled with sexy dance...](#)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Did you see my first dance video drop? Wow filled with sexy dance moves. It's quite the spectacle. Check it out [here](#).

Now, let's get into it...



Dear Permission to be Powerful Reader,

What if everything you've ever called "normal"... was actually abuse?

What happens when the people who were supposed to love you... trained you to betray yourself?

What if you really have been a fish out of water your WHOLE life?

How would you even know?

It starts early.

☞ Being told what to do...

☞ What to think...

☞ How to feel...

And worst of all—

Being told what YOU think and feel is WRONG.

☞ Maybe it's a parent who invalidates you so entirely that you stop trusting your own emotions.

☞ Maybe it's a family that treats you like the black sheep, but because it's family, you keep trying to earn a seat at a table where you were never welcome.

☞ Maybe it's years spent investing in people who never reciprocate.
Making effort after effort for people who wouldn't lift a finger for you.

Accepting double standards so absurd, so unfair, that if you saw someone else enduring them, you'd want to shake them and say...

☞ "Why do you put up with this?"

But when it's your own life, you don't question it.

**It's scarily possible to be
surrounded by bad people.**

And yet, how would you know?

Children must love their parents to survive. It's not a choice—it's biology.

And if those parents are abusive, unloving, or manipulative...

☞ **A child still loves them.**

But that love turns into something else.

**Something closer to Stockholm
Syndrome.**

☞ You learn to please the very people who harm you.

☞ You learn that your own instincts are unreliable.

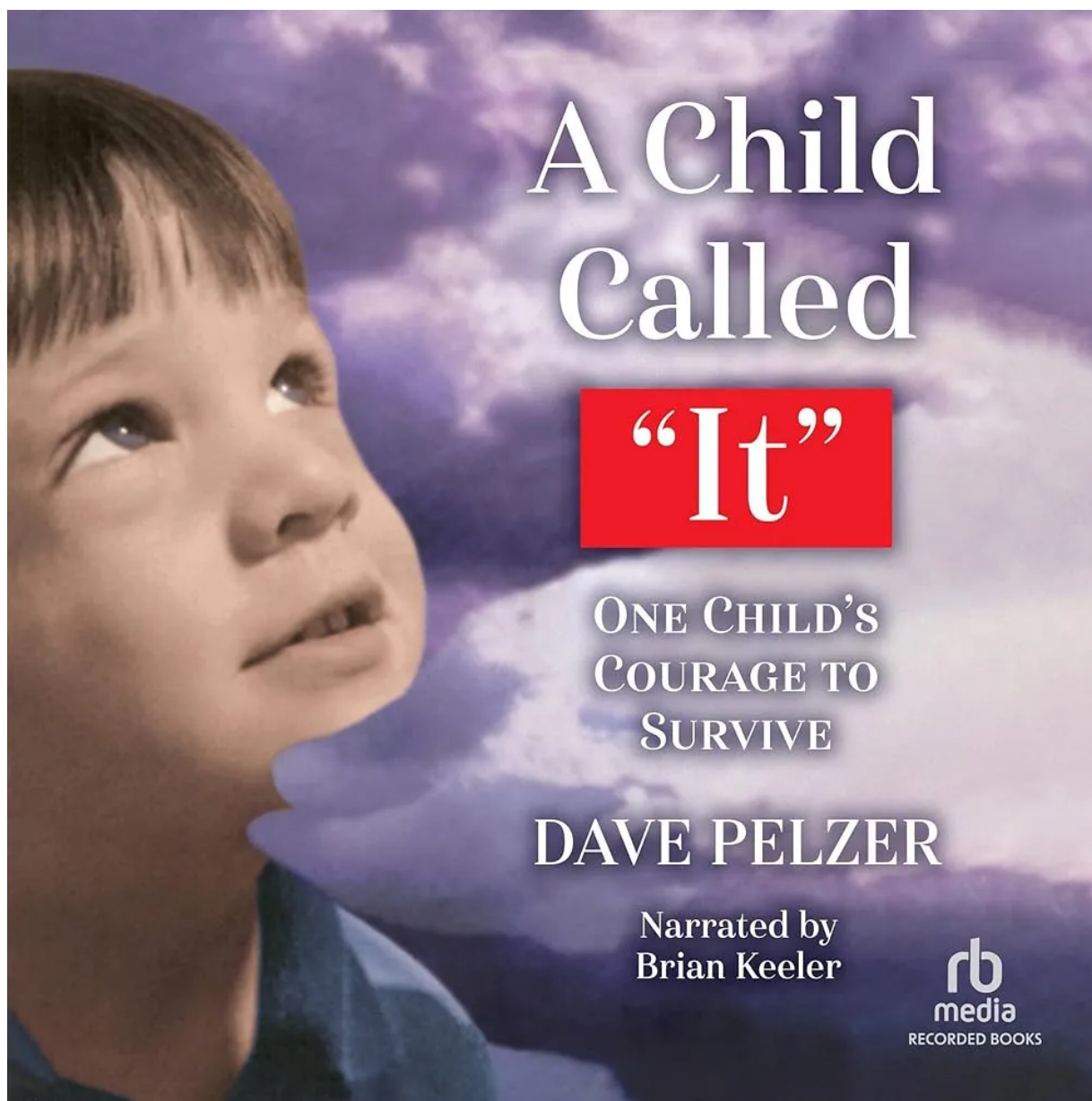
☞ You learn that your reality doesn't matter as much as *their* version of reality.

Later in life, you'll say you attract abusive people...'

But the truth is...

Maybe you were trained to tolerate them first?

**I'm re-reading A Child Called It—
a book I first read eight years ago.**



And I'm mortified by how much I relate to this kid. He's another Chauffeur. More extreme.

It's hard to fathom that we shared so much in common.

☞ One of the most horrific cases of child abuse in Los Angeles history, and I find myself nodding along.

His mother makes him eat shit...

Drink ammonia by the bottle.

She starves him.

He's so desperate for food, this little boy starts shoplifting.

At one point, she stabs him and orders him to finish up with the dishes before she finishes the job.

None of this ever happened to me...

However...

Like him, I learned to plan for every potential disaster.

☞ I learned to be hypervigilant.

☞ I learned to cover up mistreatment because there were consequences for telling the truth.

☞ I developed Stockholm syndrome and learned to side with my abuser.

☞ Every person in my life drained me.

☞ People took advantage of me.

☞ I kept finding myself in the same toxic relationship over and over again.

People treat you the way you were treated as a child.

The way we were taught by repetition over a lifetime.

This is a deeply ingrained pattern.

So familiar...

Perhaps you don't know what life without it might be like.

We are trained to go against our own self-interest in ways that are so deep, so vast, so profound, that we don't even recognize it as brainwashing.

☞ There's a part of me—a stubborn, tireless part—that will always want my abusers to change.

That will always hold out hope.

But that hope is toxic.

That hope is a trap.

It keeps me tethered to dysfunction. It convinces me to endure instead of escape.

I must know better.

This training runs deeper than just family. It's everywhere. I think back to school—standing in lines with 400 other kids, holding our arms up past the point of comfort. Daily drills. Forced obedience.

You couldn't refuse.

Because the alternative would be worse.

We were trained young.

Conditioned to override our own discomfort. To ignore how we really feel in favor of what we *should* do.

This became my norm.

But I see it now.

And now that I see it, I can't unsee it.

Living out of alignment doesn't just mean making a few wrong choices. It means your entire existence has been one long, exhausting performance. A life spent contorting yourself into whatever shape is most *acceptable* to others.

A life not feeling comfortable in your own skin.

When you live out of alignment long enough, you start feeling like a guest in your own life. Like you're wearing a body that doesn't quite fit.

Every choice you make—every word, every movement—feels *off*, like it's being filtered through a system designed to make other people comfortable, not you.

Maybe you laugh at the right times, say the things you're supposed to say, play the roles you've been assigned.

And yet, beneath it all, there's this quiet, gnawing awareness:

This isn't me.

But you play the part anyway. After a lifetime of molding yourself to fit other people's expectations, the idea of shedding that version of yourself feels more terrifying than staying trapped in it.

You learn to anticipate people's expectations before they even say them. To shrink yourself in rooms where you should take up space.

Silence your voice because speaking up would be too dangerous and too disruptive.

Maybe you've spent your whole life being *good*—a good son, a good student, a good employee, a good partner. But the more profound truth?

You've never been you.

And that's why you're SO tired.

When you live out of alignment, every interaction, every relationship, and every decision takes energy.

You are constantly filtering, adjusting, and second-guessing.

And what happens when you finally wake up and realize that the life you've built wasn't even *yours*?

The universe keeps trying to offer you wisdom, and you keep rejecting it.

When you're raised in an environment where your emotions are ignored, dismissed, or punished, you stop trusting them.

You become a stranger to yourself.

You second-guess your own thoughts.

You downplay your own pain.

You gaslight yourself.

And it happens so gradually that you don't even realize it. You wake up one day and have no idea what you *actually* want.

Because you've spent a lifetime being told that what you want doesn't matter.

☞ That's why some people stay in toxic relationships.

☞ That's why some people accept dead-end jobs that make them miserable.

☞ That's why some people never break free, even when every sign screams leave.

Because breaking free requires something that's been systematically stripped away from them—**the ability to trust themselves.**

Living out of alignment isn't just about what people *do* to you. It's about the silent agreements you make without realizing it.

☞ You agree to be the one who always gives more than you get.

☞ You agree to be okay with being treated like an afterthought.

☞ You agree to tolerate double standards because “that’s just how it is.”

☞ You agree to stay small, to keep the peace, to not rock the boat.

Over time, those agreements become invisible.

☞ You don't even realize you've made them.

☞ You just wake up one day feeling *stuck*.

☞ Feeling like life is passing you by and you don't even know *why*.

But here's the truth:

You can break those agreements.

At some point, you have to accept something painful but freeing:

Nobody is coming to save you.

The people who have taken advantage of you?

They won't wake up one day and suddenly decide to treat you better.

The toxic family members?

They aren't going to have a change of heart and become the loving, supportive people you always wished they were.

The job that's sucking the life out of you?

It's not going to magically become fulfilling.

If you don't walk away, nothing changes.

If you don't *demand* better for yourself, you will keep getting what you've always gotten.

And if you keep waiting for permission to live your own life, you will die waiting.

So how do you finally break free?

1. **Call out the conditioning.** Name it. See it for what it is.
2. **Decide that you're done.** No more tolerating. No more hoping people change. No more negotiating your own worth.
3. **Make a single, radical move toward yourself.** It doesn't have to be dramatic. It just has to be real.

- ☞ Leave the group chat.
- ☞ Say no without explaining yourself.
- ☞ Cut off the people who make you question your reality.
- ☞ Walk away from the job... the relationship...

The situation that is killing you slowly.

And then, keep going.

Because the more steps you take in the direction of your true self, the more *everything else* starts to fall away.

Living in alignment isn't something that happens overnight. It's a process.

A painful, uncomfortable, terrifying process.

But the alternative?

Living a life that was never really yours.

You already know what happens if you stay.

You've already lived it.

The exhaustion. The resentment. The quiet, suffocating death of your real self.

So ask yourself:

- ☞ **How much longer are you willing to wait?**
- ☞ **How many more years will you trade away for comfort?**
- ☞ **How much more of yourself will you sacrifice to keep the peace?**
- ☞ **How long until there's nothing left of *you* at all?**

You can choose that.

Or you can choose to burn it all down.

- ☞ The life they handed you.
- ☞ The rules you never agreed to.
- ☞ The version of yourself you became just to survive.

Set fire to every falsehood that ever kept you small.

And **reclaim your life.**

Until next time,

Anton

Dancer, Writer, Buddhist



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